

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please substitute the following claims for the same-numbered claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for revising a software application used by a plurality of nodes in a computer network, wherein said software application utilizes persistent data, said method comprising:

applying an upgrade to a first next level of software that understands both old and new persistent data structure formats;

converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format;

applying an upgrade to a second next level of software that understands both said old and new persistent data structure formats;

converting all persistent data structures into the new persistent data structure format;

applying a downgrade to a first previous level of software that understands both said old and new persistent data structure formats;

converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format; and

applying a downgrade to a second previous level of software that understands said old persistent data structure formats,

wherein the nodes are adapted to communicate with one another at a time when said nodes are operating at different software levels with respect to one another within said computer network, and

wherein both upgrade processes and both downgrade processes occur without disruption of communication between said nodes.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of according to claim 1, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said persistent data structures comprise communication packet structures.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of according to claim 2, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said software application comprises a distributed system software application, and wherein said plurality of nodes hold non-volatile memory data structures.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of according to claim 3, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said nodes communicate with one another.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of according to claim 4, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the communication between said nodes occurs using said communication packet structures.

6. (Cancelled).

7. (Currently Amended) A system for providing updates to a software application used by a plurality of nodes in a computer network, wherein said software application utilizes persistent data, said system comprising:

a first module operable for applying an upgrade to a first next level of software that understands both old and new persistent data structure formats;

a first converter in said first module operable for converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format;

a second module operable for applying an upgrade to a second next level of software that understands both said old and new persistent data structure formats;

a second converter in said second module operable for converting all persistent data structures into the new persistent data structure format

a third module operable for applying a downgrade to a first previous level of software that understands both said old and new persistent data structure formats;

a third converter in said third module operable for converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format; and

a fourth module operable for applying a downgrade to a second previous level of software that understands said old persistent data structure formats,

wherein the nodes are adapted to communicate with one another at a time when said nodes are operating at different software levels with respect to one another within said computer network, and

wherein both upgrade processes and both downgrade processes occur without disruption of communication between said nodes.

8. (Currently Amended) The system ~~of~~ according to claim 7, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said persistent data structures comprise

communication packet structures.

9. (Currently Amended) The system ~~of~~ according to claim 8, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said software application comprises a distributed system software application, and wherein said plurality of nodes hold non-volatile memory data structures.

10. (Currently Amended) The system ~~of~~ according to claim 9, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said nodes communicate with one another.

11. (Currently Amended) The system ~~of~~ according to claim 10, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the communication between said nodes occurs using said communication packet structures.

12. (Cancelled).

13. (Currently Amended) A system for providing updates to a software application used by a plurality of nodes in a computer network, wherein said software application utilizes persistent data, said system comprising:

means for applying an upgrade to a first next level of software that understands both old and new persistent data structure formats;

means for converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure

format;

means for applying an upgrade to a second next level of software that understands both said old and new persistent data structure formats;

means for converting all persistent data structures into the new persistent data structure format

means for applying a downgrade to a first previous level of software that understands both said old and new persistent data structure formats;

means for converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format; and

means for applying a downgrade to a second previous level of software that understands said old persistent data structure formats,

wherein the nodes are adapted to communicate with one another at a time when said nodes are operating at different software levels with respect to one another within said computer network, and

wherein both upgrade processes and both downgrade processes occur without disruption of communication between said nodes.

14. (Cancelled).

15. (Currently Amended) A program storage device readable by computer, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by said computer to perform a method for revising a software application used by a plurality of nodes in a computer network, wherein said

software application utilizes persistent data, said method comprising:

applying an upgrade to a first next level of software that understands both old and new persistent data structure formats;

converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format;

applying an upgrade to a second next level of software that understands both said old and new persistent data structure formats;

converting all persistent data structures into the new persistent data structure format

applying a downgrade to a first previous level of software that understands both said old and new persistent data structure formats;

converting all persistent data structures into the old persistent data structure format; and

applying a downgrade to a second previous level of software that understands said old persistent data structure formats,

wherein the nodes are adapted to communicate with one another at a time when said nodes are operating at different software levels with respect to one another within said computer network, and

wherein both upgrade processes and both downgrade processes occur without disruption of communication between said nodes.

16. (Currently Amended) The program storage device ~~of~~ according to claim 15, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said persistent data structures comprise communication packet structures.

17. (Currently Amended) The program storage device ~~of~~ according to claim 16, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said software application comprises a distributed system software application, and wherein said plurality of nodes hold non-volatile memory data structures.

18. (Currently Amended) The program storage device ~~of~~ according to claim 17, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein said nodes communicate with one another.

19. (Currently Amended) The program storage device ~~of~~ according to claim 18, all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference, wherein the communication between said nodes occurs using said communication packet structures.

20. (Cancelled).